

US EPA RECORDS CENTER REGION 5



567005

5/19/94

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**SITE ASSESSMENT REPORT  
FOR  
SALESIAN PREPARATORY SCHOOL  
CEDAR LAKE, INDIANA  
TDD: T05-9405-015  
PAN: EIN0821SAA**

**May 19, 1994**

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Date: 5/19/94

Reviewed by: Patricia Kelly

Date: 5/19/94

Approved by: HR

Date: 5/19/94



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DATE: May 19, 1994  
TO: Ms. Gail Nabasny, U.S. EPA, TAT DPO  
CC: William Simes, U.S. EPA OSC  
FROM: Michael Mangini, TAT  
SUBJECT: Salesian Preparatory School  
Cedar Lake/Lake County/Indiana  
TDD # T05-9405-015  
PAN # EIN0821SAA

On May 16, 1994, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) tasked Ecology and Environment (E&E) the Technical Assistance Team (TAT) to prepare a safety plan, conduct a site investigation, and assist U.S. EPA with neutralization/destruction of laboratory chemicals at the Salesian Preparatory School Site in Cedar Lake, Indiana. This report provides details of the site inspection, and actions taken to mitigate the threats posed at the site.

## I. Site Description

Salesian Prep is an abandoned preparatory school located one-half mile north of Cedar Lake. The Premises include a large four story building with dormitories and classrooms, a cafeteria, a gymnasium, several smaller interconnected dormitories, a stable, a greenhouse, and several small buildings. The buildings are not secured and evidence of vandalism is found over the entire premises. Local officials confirmed trespassers use the premises as shelter and for other activities. During walkthrough of the buildings, TAT observed scavenging operations, areas where fires had been set, evidence of parties, and damage in the buildings. Bullet casings were found in many of the buildings. Broken chemical bottles were found scattered outside the chemistry laboratory.

This site was brought to the attention of U.S. EPA after a police officer, while investigating a report of trespassing and vandalism, observed a broken container of red phosphorus violently reacting with the atmosphere.

## II. Site Activities

On May 17, 1994, U.S. EPA On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) William Simes and three members of TAT mobilized to site. Also present were representatives from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM), and local Fire and Police departments.

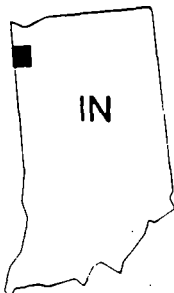
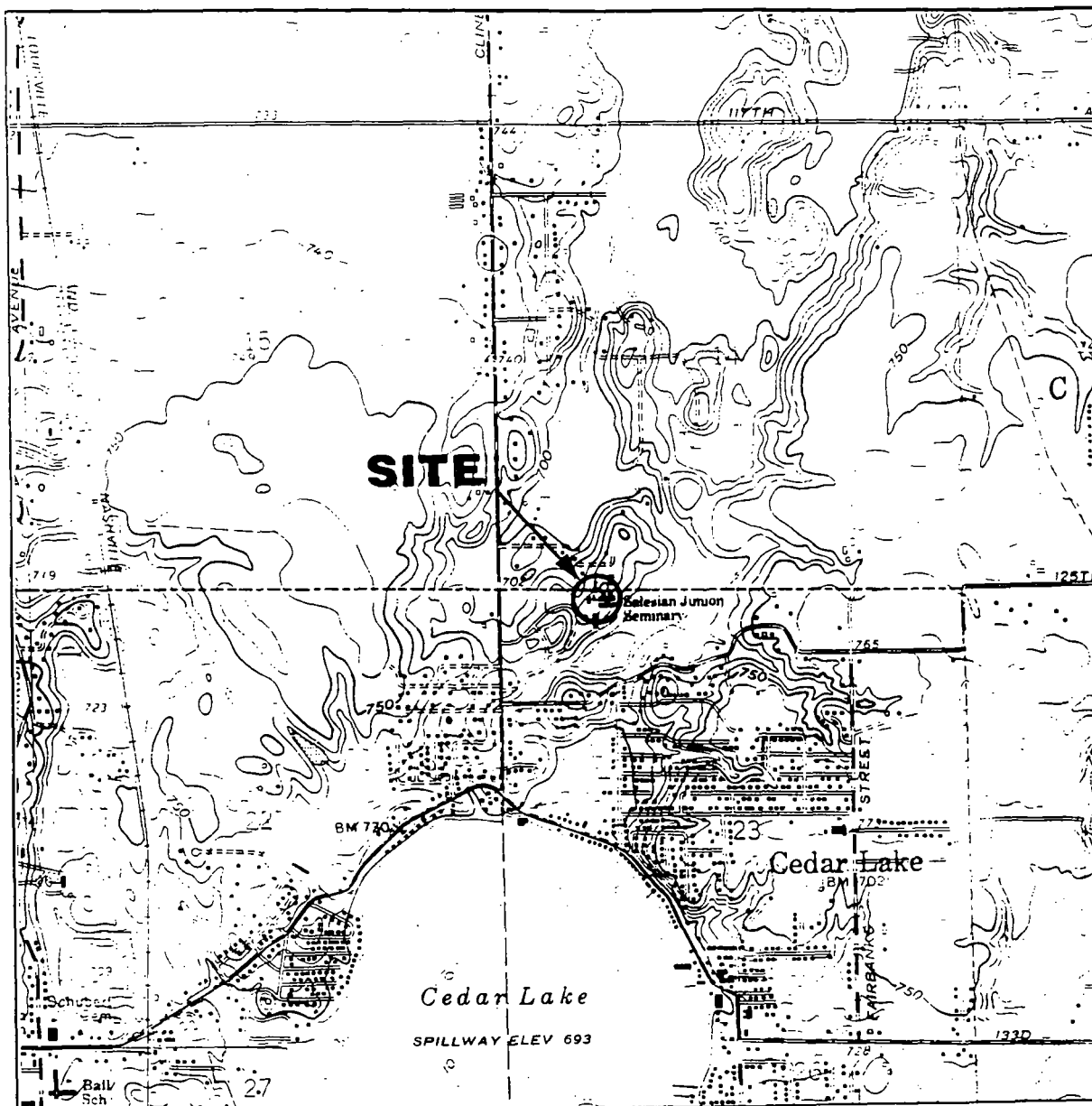
Site reconnaissance was performed by TAT and OSC. Four jars of what appeared to be dye were found in a cafeteria area, and another four containers containing various materials were found in the four story building. All other materials treated on site were found in the basement of a small dormitory building where chemistry laboratory tables were stored.

The chemicals were brought from the school's laboratory storage area to the chemical staging area where TAT could perform a hazardous categorization to determine whether materials were suitable to be combined. Two five gallon water jugs and a fifty five gallon polyethylene drum were used to hold the combined waste streams. All wastes were diluted in large quantities of water and pH was monitored with each addition. Air was monitored with an Hnu photoionization detector with a 10.2 eV probe during handling of chemicals. No readings above the background level were encountered.

Because of the vandalism at the site, the OSC, state, and local officials agreed that it was best to neutralize/destroy the laboratory chemicals on-site, rather than staging them on-site for later disposal. All compatible materials were combined in the polyethylene drum. After dilution with water and pH adjustment with a sodium hydroxide solution, the neutralized chemicals were disposed of on site. There were two containers of flammable non-chlorinated solvents found on-site that were incompatible with the aqueous wastes. The OSC felt these would constitute a fire hazard, and decided to thermally destroy these materials on-site. Four U.S. Army issue calcium hydride water reactive signal flares were found and discharged under the OSC's direction. One container labeled Pure Asbestos was found on site. The container was brought off site to secure storage, and has been shipped for analysis. One small jar labeled Picric Acid, a potentially shock sensitive explosive, was discovered on site. An attempt was made to detonate this material. The material was found to be inert and was neutralized with water. The area where the police observed the red phosphorus was monitored by the OSC. After the OSC determined that the reaction was complete, this area was flushed with water by the fire department to neutralize any possible reactive materials.

### III. Summary

The OSC, IDEM, and local representatives of the fire department agreed that all chemical threats at the site were addressed. On May 17, 1994 at 1530 hours all parties departed the site.



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**Technical Assistance Team  
Region V**

TITLE	SITE LOCATION MAP	FIGURE #	1
SITE	SALESIAN PREP	SCALE	
CITY	CEDAR LAKE STATE INDIANA	PAN	1:24,000
SOURCE	USGS TOPO MAP-LOWELL QUAD	DATE	7/12/94
		REVISED	

DRAWN BY: E & E INC.



C-LINE #52584  
35MM PRINTS



Site: Salesian Prep  
Photo No.: 1 Date: 5/16/94  
Camera: OLYMPUS INFINITY 35mm  
Photographer: Lisa Gracyzk  
Direction: South  
Subject: Road leading to chemistry  
storage building.

Site: Salesian Prep  
Photo No: 2 Date: 5/16/94  
Direction: South  
Camera: OLYMPUS INFINITY 35mm  
Photographer: Lisa Gracyzk  
Subject: Broken chemical bottles on  
road to chemistry storage building.





Site: Salesian Prep  
 Photo No: 4 Date: 5/16/94  
 Direction: South  
 Camera: OLYMPUS INFINITY 35mm  
 Photographer: Lisa Gracyzk  
 Subject: Red phosphorus and area  
 where phosphorus had reacted.



Site: Salesian Prep  
 Photo No: 3 Date: 5/16/94  
 Direction: South  
 Camera: OLYMPUS INFINITY 35mm  
 Photographer: Lisa Gracyzk  
 Subject: Shards of broken bottles on  
 road.



C-LINE #52584  
35MM PRINTS



Site: Salesian Prep  
Photo No: 5 Date: 5/16/94  
Direction: North  
Camera: OLYMPUS INFINITY 35mm  
Photographer: Lisa Gracyzk  
Subject: Part of label found near  
broken bottle.



Site: Salesian Prep  
Photo No: 6 Date: 5/16/94  
Direction: South  
Camera: OLYMPUS INFINITY 35mm  
Photographer: Lisa Gracyzk  
Subject: Broken bottle and discolored  
area on gravel.





Site: Salesian Prep  
 Photo No: 7 Date: 5/16/94  
 Direction: North  
 Camera: OLYMPUS INFINITY 35mm  
 Photographer: Lisa Gracyzk  
 Subject: Chemical Storage Area.



Site: Salesian Prep  
 Photo No: 8 Date: 5/16/94  
 Direction: North  
 Camera: OLYMPUS INFINITY 35mm  
 Photographer: Lisa Gracyzk  
 Subject: Chemical storage area.



C-LINE #52584  
35MM PRINTS



Site: Salesian Prep  
Photo No: 9 Date: 5/16/94  
Direction: East  
Camera: OLYMPUS INFINITY 35mm  
Photographer: Lisa Gracyzk  
Subject: Chemical containers on table  
in storage area.



Site: Salesian Prep  
Photo No: 10 Date: 5/16/94  
Direction: East  
Camera: OLYMPUS INFINITY 35mm  
Photographer: Lisa Gracyzk  
Subject: Condition of chemicals in  
storage area.



CLINE PHOTO  
35mm FILM



Site: Salesian Prep  
Photo No: 11 Date: 5/16/94  
Direction: South  
Camera: OLYMPUS INFINITY 35mm  
Photographer: Lisa Gracyzk  
Subject: Hazardous Categorization  
station.

Site: Salesian Prep  
Photo No: 12 Date: 5/16/94  
Direction: East  
Camera: OLYMPUS INFINITY 35mm  
Photographer: Lisa Gracyzk  
Subject: Greenhouse on school  
property.